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Paul Opposes Vice President's Education Plan *Parents Should Have Power Over Education*

SURFSIDE - Vice President Al Gore recently unveiled a new proposal that would give Washington bureaucrats an additional \$115 billion to place new regulations on local educators. A key element to the plan is that no school district could receive federal funds unless they had a plan in place to test teachers. Congressman Ron Paul criticized the plan for giving control of education dollars to unaccountable agencies in Washington. Paul said, "Each time we are given a new education proposal from Washington it involves another layer of bureaucracy, and that has proven harmful to education. If we truly want to reform the system, we need to let local school districts keep and distribute funds as they see fit." Paul further stressed that Washington's mandating teacher testing would inevitably lead to national testing as the federal government demands that state and local governments conform to their specifications. "National testing means a national curriculum," Paul explained. "Since teacher education will revolve around preparing teachers to pass the national test, new teachers will base their lesson plans on what they need to know in order to pass the Education Department-approved test." Paul authored HR 1706, a bill which passed the House of Representatives in July, prohibiting such national testing and certification. The bill's language was included in the Teacher Empowerment Act, which re-authorized those parts of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act dealing with teacher training. Last month, Congressman Paul and 14 of his colleagues, sent a letter to Senate Education Committee Chairman James Jeffords (R-VT) asking that the ban on national testing be included in the Senate version of the ESEA re-authorization. Gore's plan would also add several other obstacles for local school districts as they attempt to secure funding. Instead of giving more money and power to federal bureaucrats, Congressman Paul has proposed an education reform package centering on giving control of education back to parents and teachers. Paul recently introduced the Family Education Freedom Act (HR 935). This bill would give parents a per-year, per-child tax credit of up to \$3,000 for education related expenses. Unlike Gore's proposal, the Paul bill would allow parents the maximum amount of freedom in determining how to educate their children. It would also be free of guidelines and restrictions that only dilute the actual number of dollars spent directly on a child's education. "I will continue to use my position on the Education Committee to fight to give the dollars and authority back to parents, teachers and local districts," said Paul. "Congress has no constitutional authority to control local education systems. The bottom line is that politicians are holding our children's education hostage in Washington for political purposes, and with plan's like that offered by Mr. Gore they are also taking authority away from locally elected school boards and putting it in the hands of unelected bureaucrats."